



Urbano

ISSN: 0717-3997

ISSN: 0718-3607

Universidad del Bío-Bío. Departamento de Planificación y
Diseño Urbano

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Urbano, vol. 26, no. 48, 2023, June-November, pp. 68-83
Universidad del Bío-Bío. Departamento de Planificación y Diseño Urbano

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22320/07183607.2023.26.48.06>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=19878423007>

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SPATIALITY OF SOCIAL MEMORIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE DICTATORSHIP IN THE CONCEPCIÓN METROPOLITAN AREA (CMA), CHILE

ESPACIALIDAD DE LAS MEMORIAS SOCIALES ASOCIADAS A LA DICTADURA (1973 - 1990) EN EL ÁREA METROPOLITANA DE CONCEPCIÓN (AMC), CHILE

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El Área Metropolitana de Concepción (ÁMC) fue una de las zonas más golpeadas por la represión política y las violaciones de derechos humanos durante la dictadura. No obstante, el impacto de esta, el desarrollo urbano de las últimas décadas ha ido borrando la materialidad de las memorias vinculadas al periodo, emergiendo la necesidad de analizar y cartografiar su desarrollo en el territorio. El objetivo es dimensionar y comprender territorialmente estos lugares, utilizando una metodología cualitativa documental y de geolocalización para su identificación y catastro para, posteriormente, realizar un análisis espacial, de emplazamiento y distribución territorial. Al respecto, se identifica una amplia variedad de sitios que permanecen “enmudecidos”, mientras que los espacios que evocan la memoria son escasos. De hecho, se observa una desproporción entre la cantidad de eventos de violencia política y violaciones de los derechos humanos y la falta de visibilización de espacios públicos que den cuenta de estos acontecimientos. También, es relevante constatar la inadecuación de los espacios existentes para el desarrollo contemporáneo de prácticas de memoria, tanto en términos urbanos como arquitectónicos, abriendo interrogantes respecto de cómo se cristalizan actualmente las memorias sociales vinculadas a la dictadura.

Palabras clave: espacio público, cartografía, memorias, violación de los derechos humanos.

The Concepción Metropolitan Area (CMA) was one of the areas hit hardest by political repression and human rights violations during the dictatorship. Despite their impact, recent urban development has been erasing the materiality of memories linked to the period, highlighting the need to analyze and map their development in the territory. This article aims to dimension and territorially understand these places, using a qualitative documentary and geolocation methodology for their identification and listing, and then to conduct a spatial location and territorial distribution analysis. In this regard, a wide range of “silenced” sites are identified, while there are few spaces that evoke memories. A disproportion is observed between the number of political repression events and human rights violations and the lack of visible public spaces that account for these events. It is also relevant to note the inadequacy of existing spaces for contemporary memory practices, both in urban and architectural terms, raising questions regarding how social memories linked to the dictatorship are currently crystallized.

Keywords: public space, cartography, memories, violation of human rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fifty years after the Coup d'état, there is still a historical debt regarding what happened during the civic-military dictatorship, which was materially, intellectually, and politically responsible for one of the most aberrant acts committed by state agents in the history of Chile and what was the fate of thousands of detained missing persons. Moreover, there are still historical debts related to social justice, reparation, and memory.

Similarly, there are still historical debts in the disciplines dedicated to studying the territory – such as urbanism, architecture, geography, and territorial planning, among others – that in Chile, until recently, avoided topics related to human rights and social memories derived from the dictatorship. This research aims to contribute to filling the gap in disciplines that deal with space, just as both the maps of the memory of Greater Concepción (Olea et al., 2017) and the studies of Maturana and Domínguez (2011), who examined the interaction between the social memory of traumatic events and space, from an architectural perspective, considering the foundations of Vázquez (2018), have done. In particular, in the Concepción Metropolitan Area (CMA)⁶, the significant contributions come from alternative disciplines, such as social psychology, history, sociology, and political science, to mention a few, the most outstanding example being the academic research of Tesche et al. (2018; 2023).

The relevance of addressing the territoriality of social memory in the Concepción Metropolitan Area (CMA) is critical. First of all, it was one of the areas affected most by the political repression and human rights violations during the dictatorial regime in Chile, given its industrial character, the importance of the labor movement, and its political relevance. In addition, it is essential to know how the urban space and its different communes “communicate” the traumatic events of such an extensive period, marked by concentration camps, clandestine detention and torture centers, political prisons where torture took place, persecution of union leaders and unjustified dismissal of workers, among other severe violations of human rights. It should not be overlooked that one of the main socio-territorial consequences of the neoliberal experiment imposed during the dictatorship was the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the mass shutdown of manufacturing industries (Salazar & Pinto, 2002, pp. 148-150).

It is necessary to explore an urban space that, far from being neutral, acts as a field of discursive dispute for hegemony (Žižek, 1994). In this sense, from different social sectors, there is a need to territorialize memory to make history visible and understand the dimensions of the territorial scope of repression. It is also essential to understand how social memories linked to the dictatorship are currently crystallized in the CMA's urban spaces. For this, first, it is essential to identify and geolocate the different memory sites located in the study. Then, how they are spatially distributed in the metropolitan territory should be categorized and analyzed. This will facilitate building a map that details the political repression and generates new questions by crosschecking the elements of urban analysis and studying the spatiality and materiality of places of memory.

At present, there is a critical issue regarding the recent urban development of the CMA, which, far from preserving the materiality of memories linked to the dictatorship between 1973-1990, has contributed to their disappearance, either by demolishing significant sites, concealing them, or by installing plaques, stelae, or tablets. All these actions, in one way or another, demonstrate the dispossession that urban space has suffered vis-a-vis its intrinsic role as a depository and transmitter of social history to contain, produce, and communicate daily the testimonies that explain the historical and social evolution of the territory. In addition, these dynamic silencers have minimized the dictatorship's profound impact in the region, arbitrarily deciding what deserves to be remembered and what should be forgotten.

This situation has relegated these to social memory, to be kept alive mainly through the stories of survivors, human rights groups, and their protagonists. In contrast, this memory is systematically silenced in the public space and in urban historiographical discourses.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to examine the contemporary urban space with critical questions such as: Where is memory housed in the CMA today? In which streets, buildings, squares, and monuments? What does this say about a city whose image and urban spaces tend to hide the traces of the stories that happened there?

Faced with this context, this research aims to make visible the dimensions silenced in the social space to contribute to understanding how social processes and social memory are expressed materially in specific places. In this way, and by studying this interaction, the hypothesis is made that the environment's material characteristics can facilitate or

⁶ The CMA is understood as the conurbation comprising of Concepción, Coronel, Chiguayante, Hualqui, Lota, Penco, San Pedro de la Paz, Talcahuano, Tomé, and Hualpén.

hinder the configuration of identity spaces. At the same time, they can promote or inhibit relationships between groups and individuals and facilitate or put at risk the very capacity of the urban space to consolidate its historical-social dimension.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual Foundations of Memory and Space

The interaction between memory and space, which has been studied since the mid-twentieth century, finds its origin in the theories of Halbwachs (2004), who conceives the concept of memory as “*a reconstruction of the past*” (p. 210). This reconstruction is made based on the current needs of social groups and their relationship with the environment they inhabit.

In this context, memory acquires an eminently social character, delineated by reference frameworks that consider temporality and spatiality as fundamental coordinates. This integration results in a memory characterized by its diversity and capacity for change, reflecting the uniqueness of the subjects’ experiences in space and time.

Lefebvre (2013) elaborates on this relationship, arguing that space is produced through spatial uses and practices, experiences, symbolism, individual and collective representations, and spaces of representation. These practices are imbued with power and domination, which suggests that, for a space to be a memory carrier, it must have been appropriated by social groups, i.e., it must be part of their social identity.

Physical and Symbolic Manifestations of Memory

Regarding the analysis of memory and its inscription in space, the contributions of Rebolledo (2022), who explores the spatialities of memory through objects that symbolize significant milestones for specific collectives, stand out. Meanwhile, Jelin (2021) elaborates on this idea, pointing out that such objects – plaques, stones, and murals, among others – can be inside or outside what is recognized as “memory sites.” The latter are defined as physical spaces that witnessed situations where many victims suffered or resisted human rights violations. They are reclaimed to remember these events through the denunciation and political action of social groups actively seeking their visibility.

On the other hand, Nora (2009) introduces the concept of “places of memory,” which encompass a wide variety of spaces and their material, symbolic, and/or functional

dimensions, focused on commemoration. In contrast, the “sites of conscience” mainly have an educational role.

According to the approaches of Maturana and Dominguez (2012), the notion of ‘place of memory’ is defined as spaces lived collectively by the human experience, considering social, political, discursive, religious spaces, etc. These articulate the past and the future in the present, which is fundamental so that their spatial conditions can promote the appropriation and experience of memory by the community.

In the context of the Concepción Metropolitan Area (CMA), Rabé (2011) has pointed out some critical factors that affect memory spaces in the face of urbanistic changes. These spaces face the risk of physical deterioration, loss of meaning for social groups, and, ultimately, invisibility. On the one hand, the market logic and prevailing economic interests do not usually value these spaces in commercial terms. On the other hand, the daily and accelerated transit of people through urban spaces has been consolidating anonymous places that do not promote interpersonal relationships, weakening their historical dimension and meaning, what Augé (2000) calls “non-places.”

Territorial Identity and Spatial Conditions in the Concepción Metropolitan Area

The places of memory studied in this research are part of the CMA’s territorial system, considering its metropolitan nature, namely, urban spaces on the Bio-Bio’s coastline, whose social geography is historically anchored in different labor, mining, and industrial productive activities (Santa Cruz, 2018), as well as trade unions and politics. The territory, as a social relations setting (Montañez & Delgado, 1998), includes the social, political, and cultural history of its inhabitants and their transformations, including the dictatorship. The Bío-Bío region was the second most repressed in the country, with 159 detention and torture centers (Valech Commission, 2004), although only one of them has been declared a Historical Monument and Memorial Site by the State: “El Morro” Fort.

The memory sites of the CMA have poor spatial conditions regarding their location, visibility, and forms of access (Tesche et al., 2018). Many of them are in a deteriorating state or disappearing in material and spatial terms, considering a lack of knowledge about them and their social and historical relevance (Tesche et al., 2023).

The need to make these spaces visible from the functional dimensions of memory is confirmed, considering the different and complex effects that the dictatorship still maintains in the region, such as the

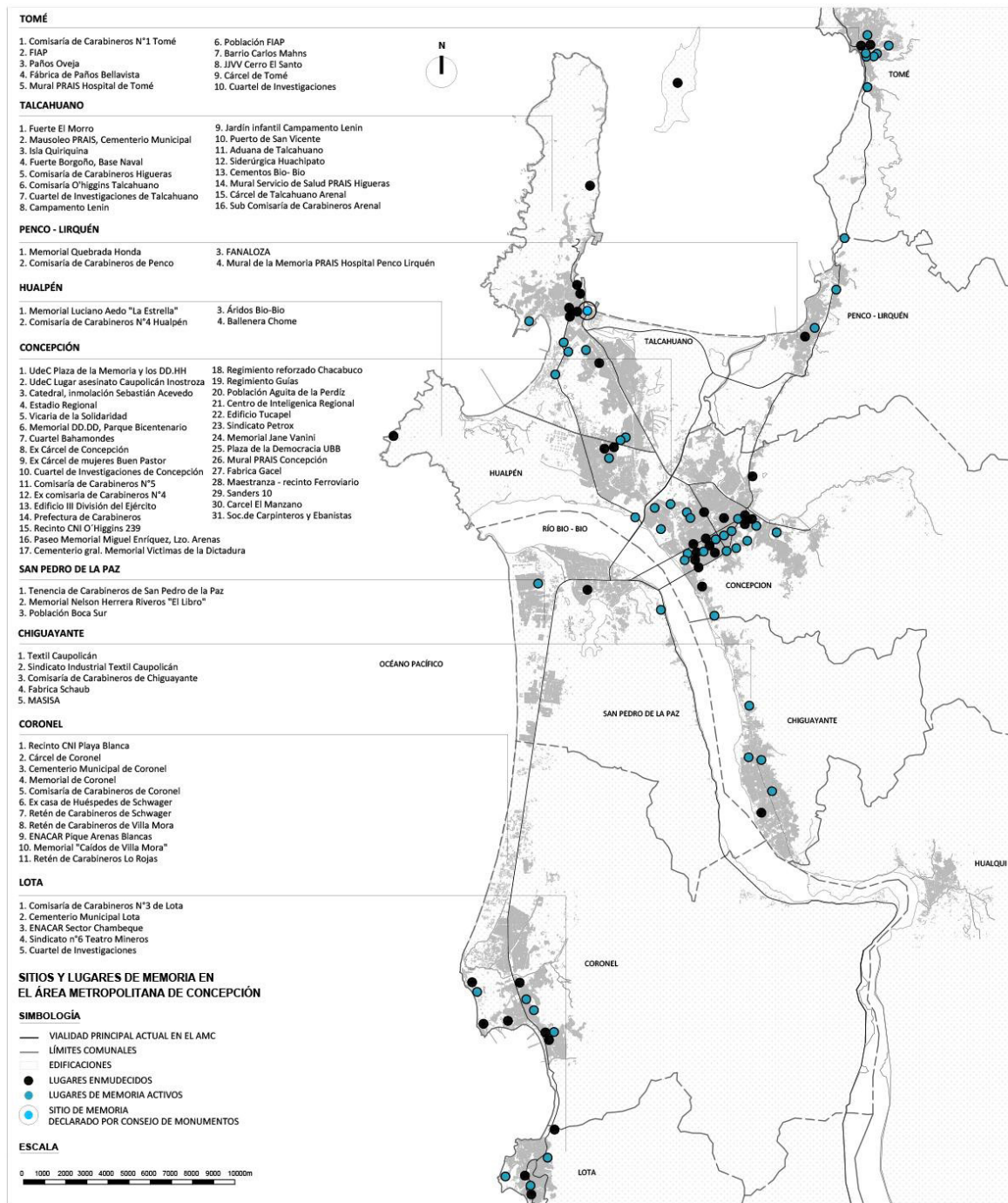


Figure 1. Sites and places of memory in the Concepción Metropolitan Area. Source: Preparation by the authors.

denial of human rights violations, vandalism of memory sites, and lack of spaces for political action in the present with a future impact (Guglielmucci & López, 2019).

The situation of the CMA's memory-bearing spaces also shows a weakness in the interaction between the past and the future in the present by not maintaining the strength nor making visible the socio-political projects and/or the calls to attention that motivated their construction. In addition, it is necessary that they emotionally and mentally move the spectators in everyday life regarding the visions of the future that they project (Rabé, 2011). This means that they must not only have urban importance but also bear moving traces of the past, i.e., contain multiple historical and political meanings that are not reduced to events, and especially, be dynamic regarding their spatial messages and practices. Finally, they need the absence, disappearance, uncertainty, or questions to be integrated, looking towards life.

III. METHODOLOGY

Collection, Geolocation, and Analysis of Memory Sites in the CMA

The current investigation considers three phases of research. The first is the collection of documentary information contained in the public archives of the Human Rights Undersecretariat, Living Memory (*Memoria Viva*), and the Museum of Memory of Human Rights, in the Rettig (1996) and Valech (2004) reports, newspaper libraries, and photographic archives. Allusions to the different places of memory of the CMA were sought in these sources. The collected information was organized into index cards by place and commune, supplemented with current images and qualitative information (Flores-Kanter & Medrano, 2019) obtained through interviews with survivors. The intention was to compare the background information collected in the secondary sources with their stories to reconstruct the historical-social dimension of a selection of significant places where memory practices occur.

The second phase consisted of geolocating the identified sites and categorizing, mapping, and filtering the information to discard duplicate places, mislabeled and with inaccurate information about their location, to territorially locate the concept of "social memory" in the CMA.

Documentary information, maps, and satellite images were considered to find the exact locations. The memory sites found were analyzed using an open-access georeferencing program to generate maps. In this phase, 88 sites and

places of memory were recorded, categorized, and geolocated: 31 in Concepción, 16 in Talcahuano, 11 in Coronel, 8 in Tomé, 6 in Lota, 5 in Chiguayante, 4 in Penco, 4 in Hualpén, and 3 in San Pedro de la Paz. From this process, the concept of "silenced place" arises, which is proposed to allude to those places that mention the events lived there (Figure 1).

The third phase was analysis and fieldwork. The case studies that will be examined in greater depth were carefully selected during this stage. The concept of "place of memory" was operationally adopted as an analytical category that encompasses different factors identified during the research, including the density of the memories they concretize, the characteristics of their location, the scale, origin, and spatial qualities, the activities carried out there, and their state of conservation. The sites chosen were then explored through visits and onsite urban and architectural analysis. The research team made these visits independently and together, accompanied by some external actors participating in memory practices. The findings were documented through observation guidelines and backed up with photographic records, which made it possible to determine the sites' material characteristics and spatial configuration, to what extent these places facilitate or not social encounters, and what kind of collective memory practices they promote.

Methodological Evaluation of Memory Sites in the CMA

To understand how the spatial qualities and characteristics of the location of memory sites influence memory practices, it is relevant to describe and analyze a selection of them to evaluate whether or not they contribute to the configuration of spaces with identity, whether or not they promote relationships between people, and whether or not these spaces have a "social-historical dimension."

In this context, to examine the hypothesis of this research, five emblematic cases were chosen: a) El Morro Fort and Memory Site, Talcahuano; b) Luciano Aedo Memorial, La Estrella, Hualpén; c) Square for the Memory and Human Rights of UdeC; d) Vicariate of Solidarity Memorial Stone; and e) Memorial of Human Rights and Executed Politicians of the Bio-Bio Region, the latter three in Concepción. As mentioned above, the selection criteria covered different aspects to reflect the diversity in the Concepción Metropolitan Area (CMA), such as the concentration of human rights violations materialized in them, the memories that they entail, their origin (i.e., who built them), their location and scale in the city, their physical characteristics and the qualities of the space they contain, and their relationship with the current memory practices carried out in them. Likewise, the state of conservation of

these sites indicates the value of the attachment that communities give them.

Finally, it is essential to point out that although the testimonies are vital in rebuilding the “social memory” linked to these places, they are not used for the current spatial analysis. This distinction is crucial as it underlines the methodology used to address the historical and social dimensions in contrast to pure spatial analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Distribution and Characterization of Memory Sites in the CMA

The study of the 88 memory sites mapped reveals a distribution that covers the entire metropolitan territory. However, given its central position from its role as the capital, Concepción is the commune that hosts most of these sites, representing more than a third of these.

In parallel, 42 places where memory has been denied, suppressed, or ignored stand out, defined in this work as “silenced places” (Figure 1, in black). These “silenced places” are spread throughout the communes of the CMA, and, surprisingly, 29 of these continue today to have the same role as during the dictatorship - police stations, prisons, Investigation Police (PDI) barracks, or military compounds – with absolutely no reminder of the historical events that took place there.

On the other hand, 12 other buildings that once served as detention and torture centers have disappeared, leaving only the accounts of those who suffered mistreatment there. Significant examples include the former public prisons of Concepción and Talcahuano, as well as some residences that were used clandestinely by the CNI, such as the Bahamondes Barracks and the property located at O’Higgins 239 in Concepción.

Urban Transformations and Their Impact on Collective Memory

The review of the CMA’s places of memory has revealed their diversity and spread and the frequent abandonment, ignorance, and collective oblivion to which many have been relegated. Before analyzing the social practices generated by these spaces, it becomes essential to consider each place’s specific spatial and urbanistic qualities. In this sense, the first aspect considered was that each site’s urban environment has changed considerably in the last 50 years. The gradual sprawl of the different communes has generated the current metropolitan urban continuum. Hence, the

environments close to places of memory have been greatly affected, impacting their valuation or perception and how one interacts with the memory sites.

An example of this can be seen in the El Morro sector, a place that, despite its significant historical burden, has been neglected and abandoned for decades, relegating it to a residual space, often perceived as dangerous. In other cases, the normalization of the presence - or disappearance - of these sites, added to the lack of a space that dignifies memory and makes it present in everyday memory practices, has resulted in invisibility. This is evidenced by the discreet plaques of the former Regional Stadium, the cross that marks the site of Sebastian Acevedo’s martyrdom, and the stone landmark that recalls where the Vicariate of Solidarity worked from. These elements condition how society appropriates these places beyond the social groups that carry out practices of memory, weakening their eventual ability to consolidate a collective memory.

Finally, spaces explicitly designed as memorials have been located in sites that do not always favor their recognition or valuation. Examples are the memorials of the Bicentennial Park or the General Cemetery. In contrast, there are sites of memory managed by groups or residents in the public space, such as the Paseo Miguel Enríquez by Lorenzo Arenas, who enjoy a greater visibility and symbolic load. However, it is necessary to ask the following questions: What happens to their spatial qualities? What kind of social practices do they promote? Analyzing these aspects is crucial to understanding their effectiveness as meeting points between the past and the present.

The following is a summary of the examples chosen (Figure 2):

A) “El Morro Fort and Memory Site

This is located in a central location, close to the Stadium and the main access road to the port of Talcahuano, and stands out thanks to its strategic location on the top of its namesake hill.

It was founded as a military fort, and despite its historical relevance, it is currently secluded, hidden, and isolated by the forest, which cuts off what is happening inside from public view. Local testimonies indicate that, although they live nearby and are aware of the events there, many have kept their distance, fearing suffering the same fate (Fritz, 2011).

In spatial terms, “El Morro” is currently the only site in the area that allows an adequate experience of historical

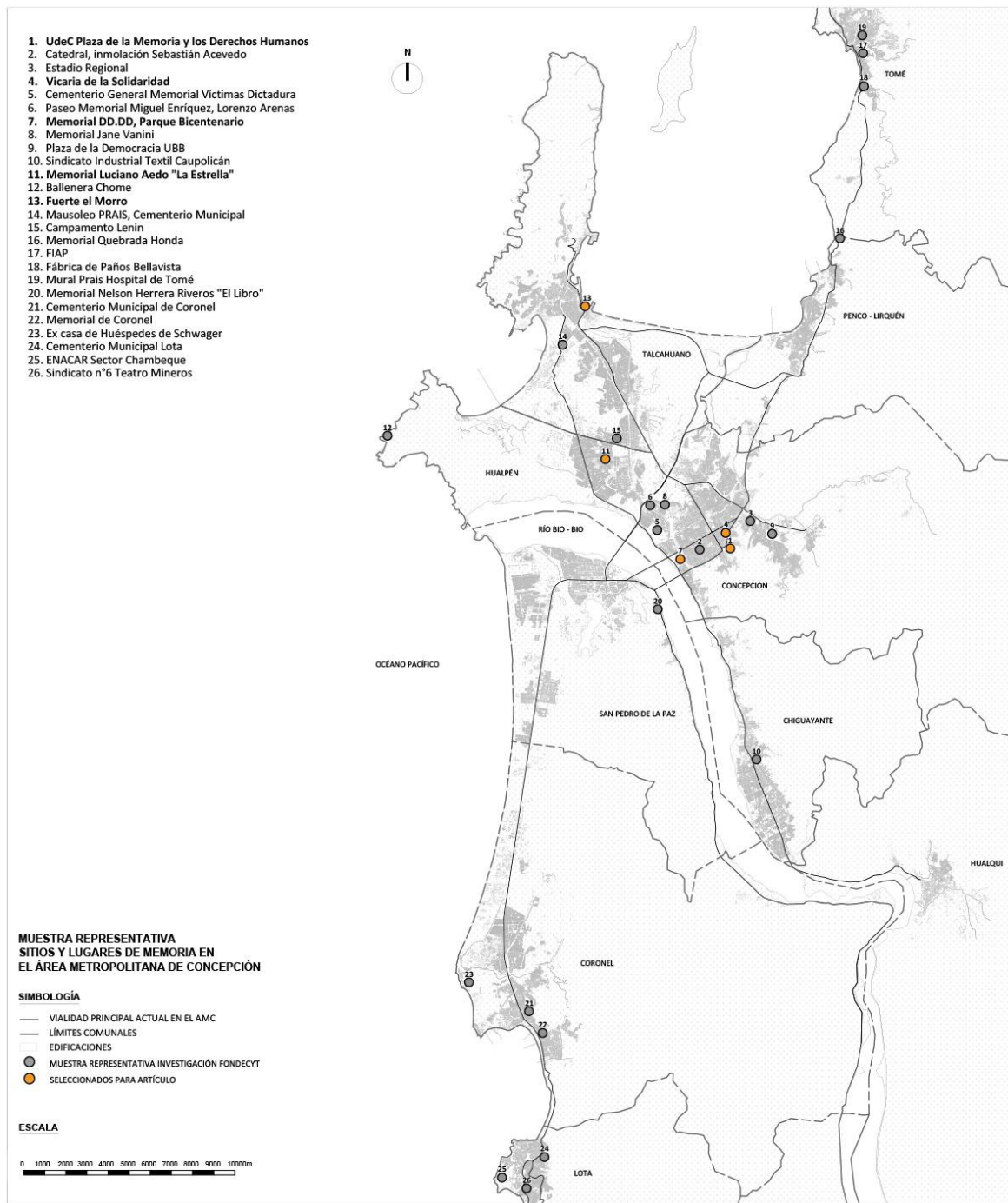


Figure 2. Sites and places of memory in the Concepción Metropolitan Area chosen as a representative sample for this article. Source: Preparation by the authors.

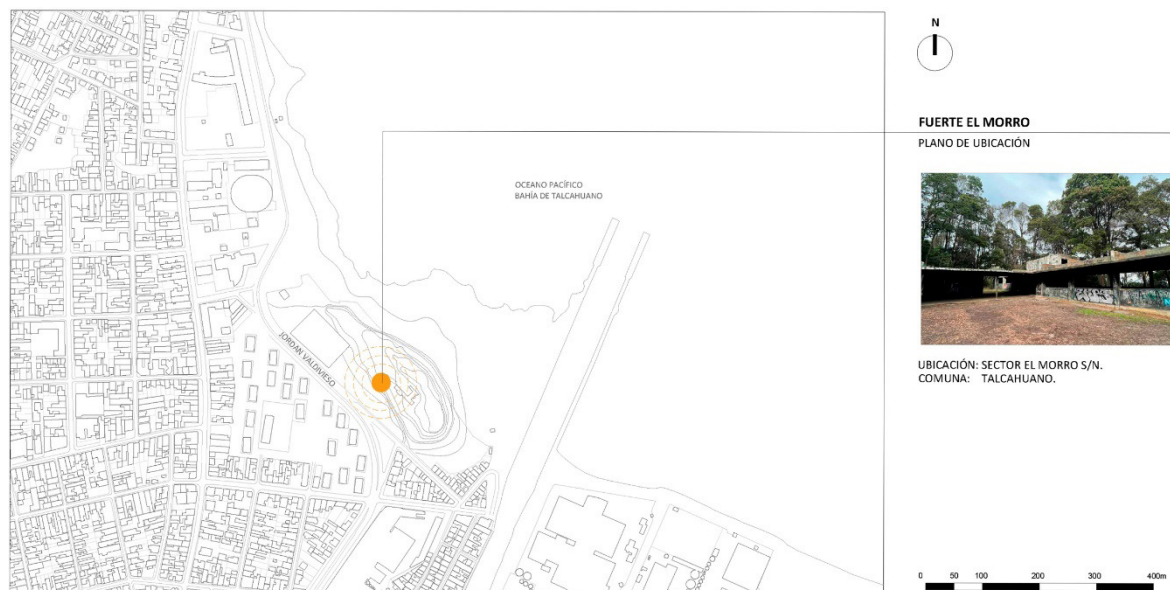


Figure 3. Plan of the El Morro Fort and Memory Site, Talcahuano. Source: Preparation by the authors.



Figure 4. El Morro Fort and Memory Site, Talcahuano. Source: Preparation by the authors.

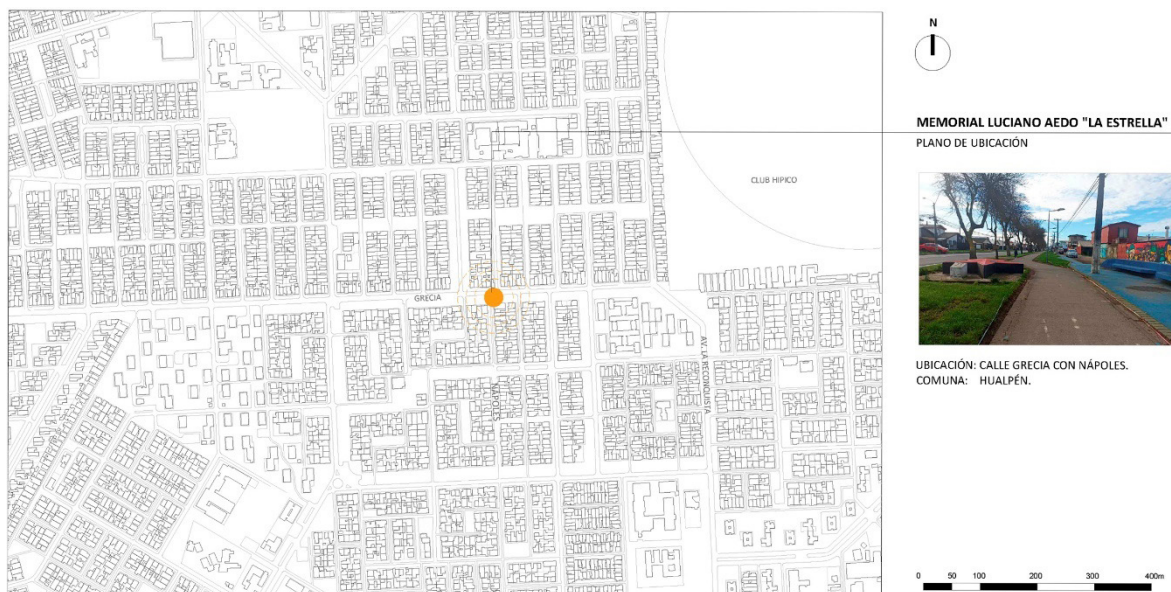


Figure 5. Plan of Luciano Aedo Memorial, La Estrella, Hualpén. Source: Preparation by the authors.



Figure 6. Luciano Aedo Memorial Mural, La Estrella, Hualpén. Source: Preparation by the authors.

memory through a tour of its facilities. Despite being declared a Historical Monument in 2017, the place is in an advanced state of decay and abandonment, as the enclosure does not have a perimeter fence or controlled access, which has allowed the facilities to be vandalized and sped up their degradation.

The designation of “El Morro” as a Historical Monument, under the current terms of the Monuments Law, does not consider a budget that allows the Municipality of Talcahuano or the Navy, who are the owners of the declared site, to carry out the maintenance needed to preserve the site considering its status and dignify the memories that the declaration extols. (Figure 3 and Figure 4)

B) Luciano Aedo Memorial, La Estrella

This is located in the heart of Hualpén, in an area that has gone from being peripheral to becoming an essential communal center on a main street with significant vehicle traffic. The memorial is erected from memory, i.e., on the exact site where the murder of Luciano Aedo (1984) at the hands of state agents took place.

However, the design of the space has certain limitations—Grecia Street and a bike path fragment it. In addition, a permanent space between green areas does not allow people to meet without interfering with other roles of the public space. (Figure 5 and Figure 6)

C) Vicariate of Solidarity Memorial Stone, Concepción.

This memory object is located in the public space, marking where the Vicariate of Solidarity once stood at the intersection of Barros Arana and Ainavillo. This institution was a place of protection and resistance during the complicated years of the military dictatorship in Chile, offering refuge and support to victims of human rights violations. The area, which in the '70s was eminently residential, today constitutes a much busier neighborhood thanks to the presence of a university.

With the demolition of the building that housed the Vicariate, its physical presence had faded away with its transcendental symbolic load since, without an appropriate space containing the object, it undoubtedly becomes challenging for memory practices to take place and the original meaning to endure over time.

In this case, the memory object is not powerful enough to decisively visualize the memories it seeks to “enhance”

because placing the object in an inappropriate public space does nothing more than hide the memories sought to be preserved. (Figure 7 and Figure 8)

D) Plaza of Memory and Human Rights of the University of Concepción

This space for memory was designed in 1993 and remodeled in 2019. In it is the concrete “Round of Unity” sculpture and a mosaic, forming a semicircle. It also has a plaque with the engraved names of 54 members of the university community – students, professors, and officials – who were murdered in Dictatorship. This memorial space is in a secondary campus area, away from the busiest and most hierarchical axis: Medical Arch, Forum, and Library.

The current design of the square does not facilitate connection between the space's different memory objects, nor does it allow memory practices to occur within it. The main sculpture is the only central element, without integrating other objects of memory or relating harmoniously to their surroundings. In particular, the mosaic mural is not spatially incorporated into the square's design nor into the pedestrian circulation circuit that allows it to be appreciated.

Even though its location is neither isolated nor marginal, the square fails to be a significant attraction point for pedestrians, allowing it to be the most visited place of memory outside the formal circuits. (Figure 9 and Figure 10)

E) Memorial of the Disappeared and Executed Political Detainees of the Biobío Region

This memorial, built at the end of the twentieth century, is located at the top of the Bicentennial Intersections of the University of Concepción campus with the Bio-Bio River. The socio-spatial fragmentation of the public space where the memorial is located makes it impossible for pedestrian traffic from the old part of the city to be continuous and fluid. On the one hand, the railway interrupts the continuity of the block and, on the other, the highway does not provide the appropriate accessibility conditions or the uses of the adjacent properties, such as the Mirador Bio-Bio Mall and Regional Theater, which do not provide public or pedestrian life to the public space, nor favor an adequate recognition of this space.

On the other hand, Bicentennial Park, where the memorial is located, is also used for events such as the REC Festival or International Craft Fair. Although these uses of space are essential for local culture and entertainment, they do not contribute to the upkeep of the place of memory or

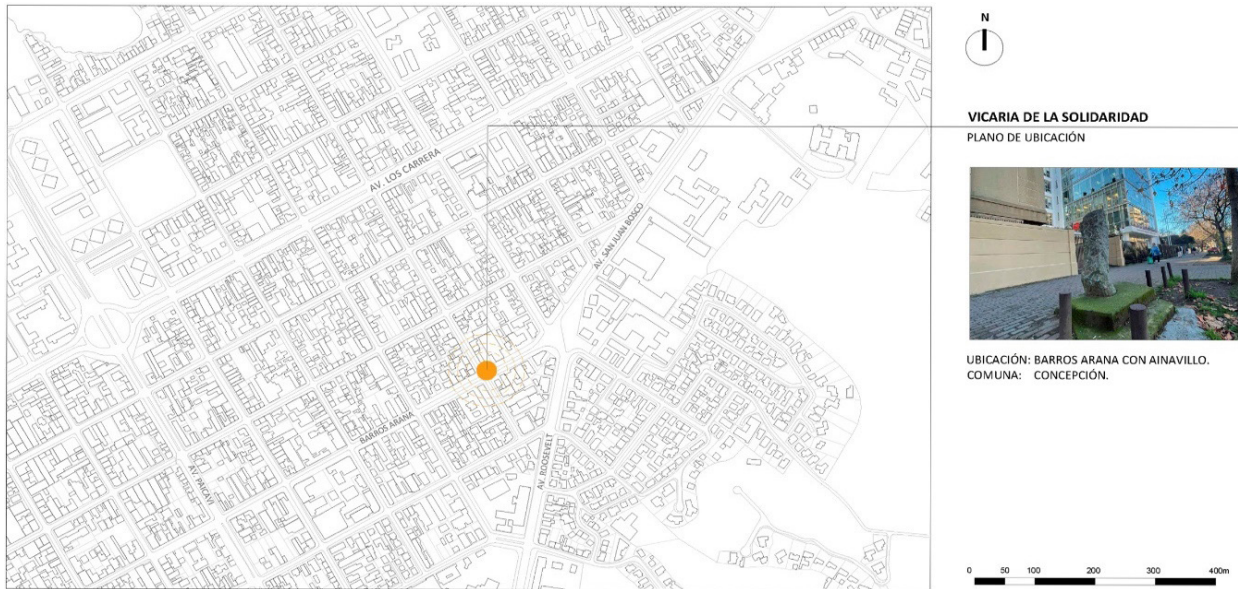


Figure 7. Location of the Vicariate of Solidarity Memorial Stone. Source: Preparation by the authors.



Figure 8. View from the pavement, Vicariate of Solidarity Memorial Stone. Source: Preparation by the authors.

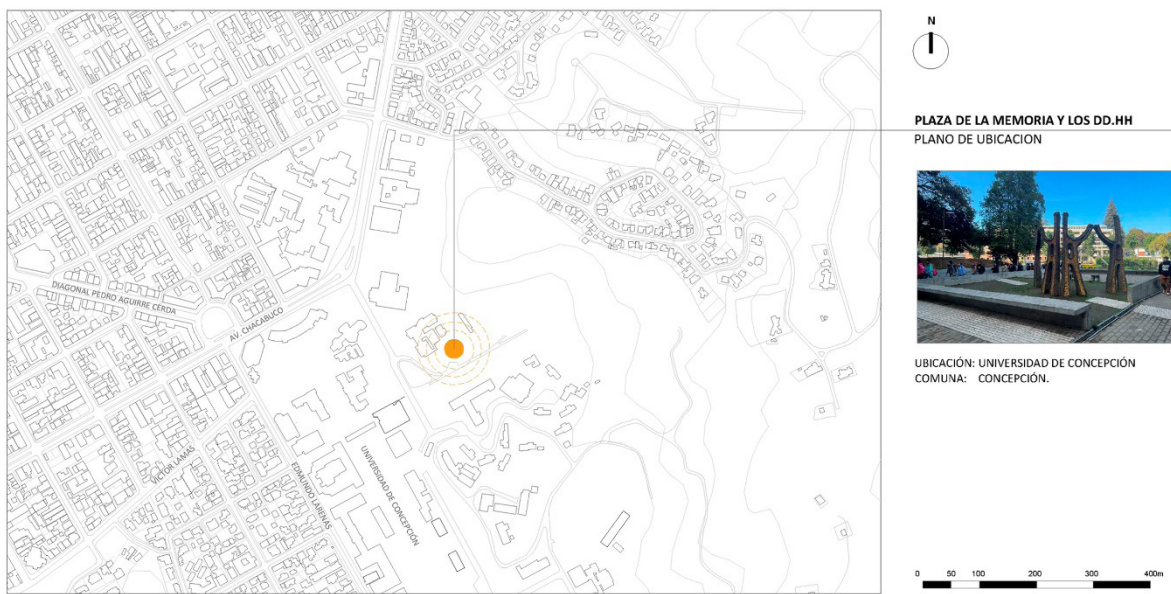


Figure 9. Location of the Square of Memory and Human Rights University of Concepción Campus. Source: Preparation by the authors.



Figure 10. Location of the Square of Memory and Human Rights University of Concepción Campus. Source: Preparation by the author.

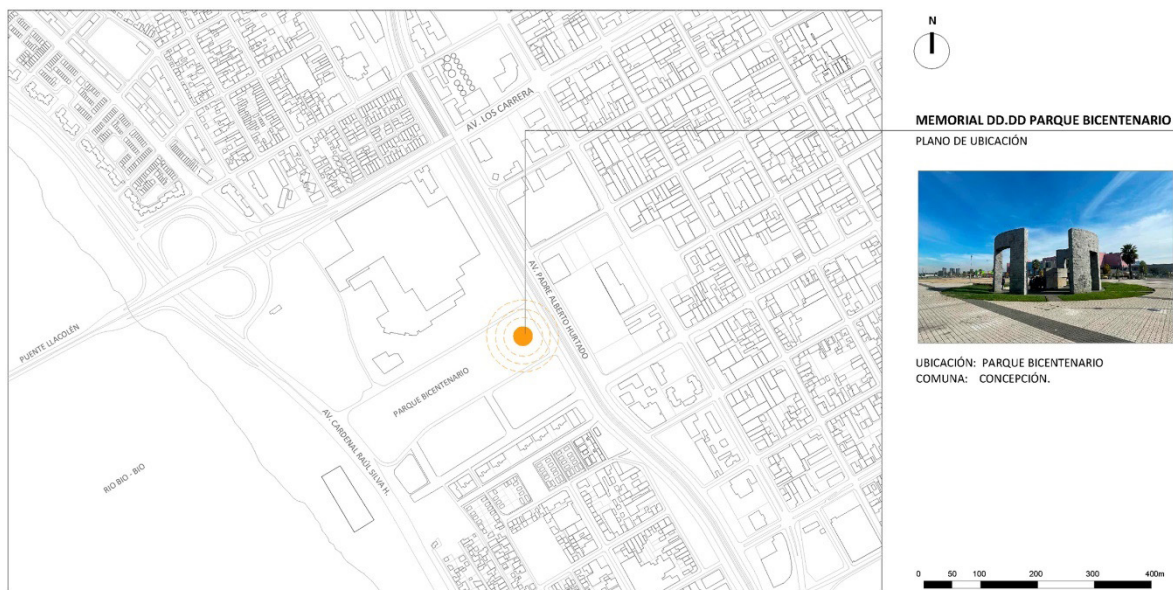


Figure 11. Location of Memorial of Human Rights and Executed Politicians and Bicentennial Park, Concepción. Source: Preparation by the authors.



Figure 12. Interior view sculptural complex - Memorial of Human Rights and Executed Politicians and Bicentennial Park, Concepción. Source: Preparation by the authors.

preserve the symbolic load that the sculptural ensemble has. On the contrary, they have led to its vandalism, which undermines the integrity and original purpose of the memory site.

Although the space that makes up the memorial's sculptural ensemble can fulfill its designed purpose, its location within the urban fabric does not favor its proper citizen appraisal. (Figure 11 and Figure 12)

V. DISCUSSION

If you start from the premise that "social memory" is a reconstruction of the past in the present (Halbwachs, 2004), the lack of milestones, marks, and commemorative spaces that give an account of the human rights violations that occurred during the dictatorship in the CMA's urban space is worrying. This situation is partly a result of unregulated urban development and poor urban planning that has prioritized the city's physical transformation over the protection or enhancement of these places of memory. In this sense, it can be argued that a particular local "urban negationism" tends to erase what one prefers to forget or turns it into "silenced places."

However, given their status as the stage of a discursive dispute, this very public space allows different social groups to express themselves through memory practices, appropriation, and resignification actions, which give meaning to the sites. This constant tension between the "denialist" forces and those who resist forgetting materializes a particular spatiality and urban form that reflects the fragmented result of unresolved social conflicts. These express what is possible or desirable to communicate in a society at a given time and place, a dynamic exercise of power between those who can impose their narratives and those who lack them. Thus, the memory crystallizes in those interstices that result from this conflict.

For this reason, it becomes essential to define and implement public policies that protect these memory spaces, seeking to strengthen the capacity of places to "evoke" social memory because their safeguarding is a responsibility of the State.

It is essential to understand that the relationship between urban space and memories changes over time, just as the society that hosts them has transformed, and the meanings and forms of appropriation that different social groups make of them change (Rabé, 2011). In this sense, in the last decade, there has been a growing interest in territorializing memory with the inauguration of most of the CMA's spaces and objects of memory (plaques, milestones, mosaics,

monuments). So far, it has been more relevant to point out the places that begin to question themselves regarding the spatial qualities they must have for proper memory practice.

This aspect is crucial for the development of social practices of memory. Material conditions and state of conservation can even take a back seat if the location and spatial conditions of memory sites and places combine the appropriate conditions, such as allowing gathering, remaining, and dignifying the memories they treasure through commemoration practices. It is relevant, therefore, to know how these memories materialize in the territory, their tangible expressions, their origins, urban characteristics, and spatial qualities, and their level of appropriation by society.

These aspects allow "symbolic learning" about cultural history, values, and beliefs to occur, facilitating the formation of subjectivities and identification with social groups in the territory.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the importance of memories for society, given that they promote the cohesion of the social group they emanate from, harmonize the symbolic valuations of the events, and allow the recreating of senses and meanings in the present, it is clear that the places of memory are fundamental as it is in these spaces that their meaning finally crystallizes.

However, the limited visibility of memory locations in the CMA, as well as the verification of a wide territorial distribution of sites and places where human rights violations and political violence associated with the dictatorship occurred, reveal a social phenomenon that has been underestimated and poorly studied by the disciplines that deal with space and territory.

Therefore, it is inescapable to note that almost half the individualized memory locations are characterized by being "silenced places" and that the spatial qualities of the CMA's most widely recognized places of memory are unsuitable for contemporary social memory practices. This highlights the need for a critical review and a more active intervention by authorities and civil society to preserve and revitalize these spaces, ensuring their visibility and relevance in the current social and urban fabric.

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